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CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, STRATFORD-ON-AVON

[Frontispiece

SHAKESPEAREAN JOTTINGS

COLLATED

IN A LECTURE DELIVERED

BY

SIR ARTHUR HODGSON, K.C.M.G.

IN THE STONELEIGH INSTITUTE
STONELEIGH, WARWICKSHIRE

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ON SHAKESPEARE.

SO beaten a track as lecturing on Shakespeare renders it difficult to offer anything new, more especially as the task has been undertaken by the most learned men in the world of letters; but I may be permitted to say that it is a novelty to listen to one who has had the honour of having been elected Mayor of Stratford-on-Avon for five consecutive years, an honour unprecedented during the municipal existence of that borough, extending over 350 years, and who, as Chairman of the Trustees of Shakespeare's Birthplace, has had opportunities of examining records, valuable and rare books, bearing upon the life and times of our great poet. I crave your indulgence while I attempt to give inadequate expression to my love and reverence for the master-mind of all literature and the interpreter of all future ages of human nature.

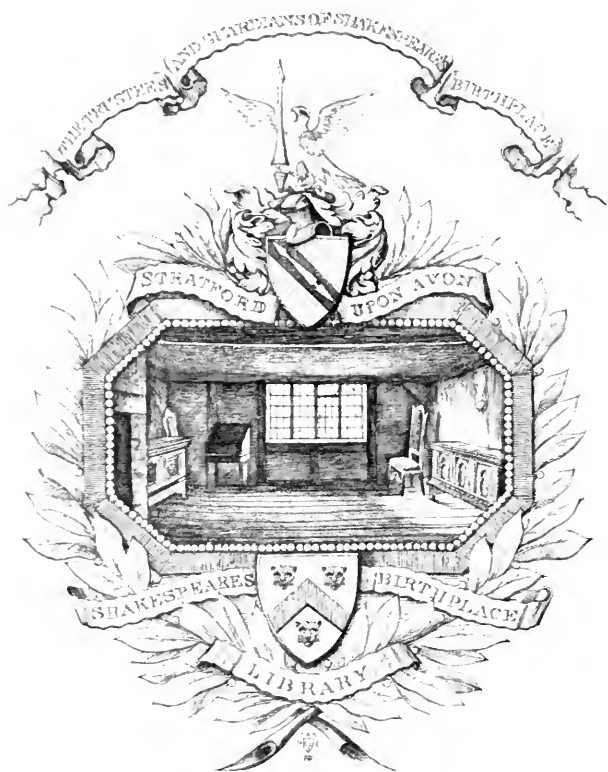
Shakespeare's father was born in Smithfield; he was a "wool stapler" and a glover, and in 1552 lived in Stratford at a house in Henley Street, known as Shakespeare's birthplace. He married Mary Arden in 1557. He appears to have ran the gauntlet through the regular course of municipal life; in 1556 he was a

juror in the court-leet ; in 1557 an ale-taster ; in 1558 a burgess ; in 1559 a constable ; in 1561 borough chamberlain ; in 1565 an alderman ; and in 1568-1569 high bailiff or mayor.

“ Him in our body corporate we chose,
And, once amongst us, he above us rose,
Stepping from post to post he reached the chair,
And there he now reposes, that’s the mayor.”

In those days the corporation consisted of a bailiff, thirteen aldermen, and fourteen burgesses ; we now have a mayor, six aldermen, and seventeen councillors.

Our poet was born in 1564, on April 23, St. George’s day, the patron saint of England, and the record of his baptism is to be seen in the register of Stratford parish church, April 26, as it was then the custom to baptize on the third day after birth. He in due course was sent to the grammar school founded by Edward the Sixth, who died in 1553, and had it not been for that school his mighty genius might have been lost to the world. It was usual for boys to enter the grammar school at the early age of seven, so it would be about 1571 when William Shakespeare, with his “satchel and shining morning face” crept (as boys do now) unwillingly to school. When I last was in this room it was my pleasure to listen to the first lecture of the season, when the lecturer cleverly described the grammar school, which, thanks to the munificence of the late Mr. Charles Flower, has been very recently restored. The salary of the head master was then



THE BIRTH-ROOM OF THE POET IN THE BIRTHPLACE

Reproduced from a bookplate by C. W. Sherborn

larger than that received by the head master of Eton. At the early age of fifteen, owing to the straitened circumstances of his father, he was taken away from that school, having made good use of his time, as it is supposed he was assistant master before he went to London in 1585. He married Anne Hathaway in 1582; she lived in the pretty hamlet of Shottery, about one mile distant from Stratford across the fields, known far and wide as Anne Hathaway's cottage, and purchased in 1892 by the trustees of the birthplace for £3,000, and the furniture for £500.

Their first child, Susanna, was baptized in the parish church on May 26, 1583, and in 1607 was married to Dr. John Hall, a well-known physician who resided in Stratford, his house, known as "Hall's Croft," being now in perfect preservation, and situated near the parish church. Dr. Hall died in 1635.

In 1586 twins were born, Hamnet and Judith; the former died in his twelfth year. Judith married Tom Quiney, a vintner. Our poet was only eighteen and a half years when he married, his wife being six years older. The year of Shakespeare's birth was a fearful year for Stratford. From June 30th, 1564, to December 31st, 238 persons, one-sixth of the population, were carried off by the plague, but it did not touch the house in Henley Street where the infant Shakespeare lay, and not one of that name appears in the death register. According to the Commissioners' Survey of Religious Houses, 37 Henry VIII., 1545, Stratford contained a population of 1,500 "houseling persons," being

all those who received the Holy Sacrament. It may therefore be computed that the entire population of Stratford numbered in the time of Shakespeare, *five thousand*, including children.

When eleven years old Shakespeare was an eyewitness of the princely pleasures at Kenilworth Castle, which he is supposed to have recalled in "Midsummer Night's Dream." Shakespeare may have assisted in shooting a deer, not a very uncommon offence in those days, when the constant singing of Robin Hood ballads, so popular then, made deer-stealing, or deer-stalking, quite a romantic adventure.

Sir Thos. Lucy may have treated the trespass too severely, but the ill-feeling imported into it is the invention of modern times. There is no record of any magisterial proceedings at Charlecote or elsewhere; the deer was in all probability shot in Fulbroke Park, when the fence and paling were broken down during the long attainder of the owner, Sir Francis Englefield, who died an exile at Valladolid, in Spain, in 1592.

Tradition tells us that a ballad, composed by Shakespeare, and turning Sir Thomas Lucy into ridicule, was fixed on the park gates of Charlecote, which so provoked the owner that he persecuted our poet, compelling him to leave the county and fly to London. On the other hand, we know that Sir Thomas Lucy was an exemplary county squire, represented Warwickshire in two successive parliaments, died in 1600, buried in Charlecote Church, where a beautiful monument by Bernini in Carara marble is erected to his memory.

If Shakespeare did steal the deer, causing him to fly to London, so much the better for the world at large ; at an early age he was naturally inclined to acting and poetry, and wisely judged that he would find in London the widest scope for his talents. We search in vain to discover how his time was occupied from 1579 until 1585 ; we may fairly infer that he lost no opportunity of "mental culture," we must all admit that he was endowed with almost a superhuman genius ; it has been suggested that he was partly employed as a clerk in an attorney's office in his native town, and I shall shortly endeavour to explain that this is more than probable. 'Tis a pity that we have no diary extant of our poet, no private letters to his wife or children (for he was a good husband and kind father), no record of his conversation, no correspondence with his numerous friends, not even with his intimate friend Ben Johnson, and no character of him, drawn with any fullness, by a contemporary. Not one scrap, not a half sheet of paper of Shakespeare's handwriting, only five signatures known to be genuine, three upon the will in Somerset house, one upon the mortgage deed of the Blackfriar's property in the British Museum, and one upon the conveyance of this property in the Guild Hall, London. Why should we possess so little of one who wrote so well and so much ? The truth is Shakespeare, after his death, dropped out of sight. The Puritans were in the ascendant, they dominated everything, plays were regarded as an abomination and destroyed—the valuable portrait of

our poet in the Birthplace was painted over by another portrait, and brought to light about forty years ago during the process of cleaning; it is an obvious copy of the bust in the parish church, and was presented to the Trustees of the Birthplace in 1867 by the late Mr. W. O. Hunt, town clerk, one of our greatest benefactors.

We will follow him to London, where he is supposed to have arrived almost penniless, glad to earn an honest penny by holding gentlemen's horses at the theatre door pending better employment. He was not altogether friendless, he knew a Stratfordian in London, one Field, a well-known publisher, who in 1590 printed Shakespeare's first poem, "Venus and Adonis." In May, 1886, I was invited as Mayor of Stratford to meet the Lord Mayor of London, who came in civic state to unveil a window to the memory of Shakespeare in St. James's Church, Shoreditch, on the site of *The Curtain Theatre*, where it is reported Shakespeare acted for the first time. It was an interesting function, and in the middle of the stained glass window was a full-length portrait of the poet by "Clayton and Bell."

In those days, about the year 1600, the hour of commencing a play was 3 o'clock p.m., "All that can sing and say Come to the Town House and see a Play, at 3 o'clock it shall begin, bring your money and look in." The price of admission to the best places was one shilling, galleries and pit were sixpence; money was then five times of more value than



[From a photo by D. McNeill]

THE PULPIT IN THE PARISH CHURCH

Presented by Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B.

Dedicated by the Lord Bishop of Worcester, October 21st, 1900.

now. The interior, save over the stage galleries, was open to the skies ; the stage was strewn with rushes, but on rare occasions matted ; the theatre, when it became dark, was lighted by large open lanterns, similar to those once in use and fitted to the poop of a ship. When tragedies were acted the stage was hung with black. Scenery was unknown, the back of the stage was hung with tapestry. Although the play commenced in broad daylight, the actors painted their faces. The audience would amuse themselves with reading, playing at cards, drinking, and smoking during the performance. Nut-cracking in the pit and gallery was a common practice.

In May, 1885, during my mayoralty, Mr. Potter, brother of the Bishop of New York, unveiled the so-called American window in Stratford Parish Church representing *The Seven Ages of Man*, illustrated by the Bible, and the gift of American visitors, at a cost of £250.

Subjects of Seven Ages.

Moses in the bulrushes.

Ely and Samuel.

Rachel and Jacob.

Joshua.

The Judgment of Solomon.

Abraham and the Angel at the tent.

Isaac blessing Jacob.

In 1592 we find him frequently mentioned as a rising actor, and for some years he belonged to a

company of strolling players who visited many towns in England. We must not understand that Shakespeare was constantly present at these representations—very fortunately for us his time was better employed—but he lent his name and was a large shareholder.

At one time he desired the appointment of "Master of the Revels," but the Lord Keeper bestowed it upon one "Daniel."

Shakespeare's road from London to Stratford was through Uxbridge, Beaconsfield, Oxford, Woodstock, and Shipton-on-Stour, and he visited his native town once a year on horseback when he did not travel on foot, and he knew more about a horse than most people, although not educated as a veterinary surgeon, or trained for a jockey, and he gave several quotations from his popular plays. I will give you one :

"Round hoofed, short pointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head, and nostril wide,
High chest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide,
Look what a horse should have, he did not lack
But a proud rider on so proud a back."

Venus and Adonis.

He had great opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of horses—horseback in his day was the only way of getting from one town to another, and heavy goods were carried on pack-horses owing to the badness of the roads.

Shakespeare wrote thirty-four plays. Between 1591 and 1599 he wrote sixteen of his plays. Malone

places "The Comedy of Errors" first, written in 1591, and his last, "The Tempest," written 1611. "Hamlet" was written in 1600, "As You Like It" in 1601, "Henry VIII." in 1603. The number of lines in all his plays amount to 105,970, "Hamlet" taking the lead with 4,060. Some writers have said that he was a natural wit without any art, that he could be deeply religious, but it would be difficult to make out his creed; in answer to this he adapted more quotations from the Bible than any living poet before or after. Lady Warwick publicly stated a short time ago, "I am pleased to note that the works of Shakespeare were in great request, because, in her opinion, next to the Bible, the poet's plays contain more wisdom and more knowledge of human nature than could be found in any other book."

His plays teem with Biblical quotations; they are never introduced in a flippant style, but as befits their sacred character, and it is a matter of surprise that, living so near the period of the Reformation, his works should exhibit such an entire absence of sectarian bias.

In 1598 he bought a house, now known as New Place, in Stratford, for £60, but it was not until 1609 that he finally settled in Stratford, and he supplied the stage with one play every year, and occasionally two plays, up to 1611, receiving such a large sum that he spent £1,000 a year. I doubt this, as it would be equal to £5,000 a year of our present value. He did not keep a carriage, paid no taxes, drank no claret

or champagne (then unknown), and meat was sold at twopence per pound ; his drink was restricted to sack, beer, and strong ale, of which he is supposed to have drank his full share, but such beverages did not run into money. In the Guild accounts of Stratford in 1504 I find amongst other items :

200 Pullets cost 16*s.* 7*d.*, about 1*d.* each.

147 geese, 24*s.* 6*d.*

6 capons, 3*s.* 2*d.*

2 calves, 5*s.*

5 gallons of milk, 5*s.*

I have often read that the Earl of Southampton, his kind friend and patron, gave him £1,000 when he stood in need. This story has been handed down by Sir William Davenant. * I hear some one say, "don't believe it." Well, I do, and posterity ought to be thankful to his lordship's munificence, which set an example to others. Those who have read the life of the celebrated actor, John Kemble, will remember that in 1808 the Duke of Northumberland of that day gave John Kemble £10,000 towards rebuilding Covent Garden Theatre, burnt down in 1807.

It has been remarked by anti-Shakespeareans that our great poet, with such a limited education, could not have written the plays with which he is credited.

List of Plays in the order in which they are supposed to have been written :

- | | | |
|-----|----|-----------------------------|
| No. | 1. | Love's Labour's Lost. |
| | „ | 2. Two Gentlemen of Verona. |
| | , | 3. Comedy of Errors. |

- No. 4. Romeo and Juliet.
" 5. Henry VI. First Part.
" 6. Richard III.
" 7. Richard II.
" 8. Titus Andronicus.
" 9. Merchant of Venice.
" 10. King John.
" 11. Venus and Adonis.
" 12. All's Well that Ends Well.
" 13. Taming of the Shrew.
" 14. Henry IV.
" 15. Merry Wives of Windsor.
" 16. Henry V.
" 17. Much Ado About Nothing.
" 18. As You Like It.
" 19. Twelfth Night.
" 20. Julius Cæsar.
" 21. Hamlet.
" 22. Troilus and Cressida.
" 23. Othello.
" 24. Measure for Measure.
" 25. Macbeth.
" 26. King Lear.
" 27. Timon of Athens.
" 28. Pericles.
" 29. Anthony and Cleopatra.
" 30. Coriolanus.
" 31. Cymbeline.
" 32. The Winter's Tale.
" 33. Henry VIII.
" 34. The Tempest.

We must bear in mind that he was a man of vast intellect, with great powers of observation, and a loving heart which beat in quick and active sympathy with everything around him. At the Stratford Grammar School he learnt small Latin and probably less Greek.

He was compelled to learn Latin, as it was the favourite language of the Court, and he learned and knew French, which he occasionally introduced into his plays, more particularly in act v. of the historical play of Henry V., albeit not strictly grammatical.

In 1592 the plague raged in London for nearly twelve months; by order of the government, theatres were closed, and Shakespeare may have then made the fashionable tour of Italy, and put together in his own imagination "The Merchant of Venice," "Romeo and Juliet," "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," "Othello," and "The Taming of the Shrew." It is difficult to understand how he could have drawn so many characters to the life, described so accurately the inner life of the Venetians, their manners, their customs, their phrases, if he had not visited Italy; at the same time I must admit that my correspondence with Venice, Padua, and Verona has not assisted me in solving this difficult problem, and in the opinion of many writers, Shakespeare is supposed to have borrowed his ideas from Italian novels,¹ and frequent intercourse with men of letters in London who had visited Italy. In the Shakespeare Memorial Picture Gallery in Stratford hangs his portrait purchased by the late Mr. Henry Graves in Venice sixteen years ago, a remarkable likeness in oils, name of the artist unknown, but considered by Mr. Graves, no mean judge, to have been painted in Shakespeare's time by an Italian master.

¹ Shakespeare is supposed to have taken his Shylock from "Gesta Romanorum."

How did it get to Venice unless he sat for his portrait when visiting that city? Again, in the cathedral at Siena you can see, on the pavement in the nave, mosaics representing the seven ages of man as partly described in the play of "As You Like It," *but* executed by Giovanni Fiorentino one hundred years *before* Shakespeare was born, my contention is that he visited Siena, and that his "seven ages of man" are not *quite* original.

It has been said that it was difficult to travel in those days, but in visiting the beautiful church of Santa Croce in Florence, I stumbled across the marble tomb of John Catrick, Bishop of Exeter, who died in Florence in 1419, on an embassy from King Henry V. to Pope Martin V.

Nothing was more common in the time of Elizabeth than to "swim in a gondola," and we know that Shakespeare, before he was thirty, was well off, and fully able, as regards expense, to have travelled in Italy. The scene of "The Taming of the Shrew," in which the accomplished American actress, Ada Rehan, plays Catharina, is laid at Padua; it was first acted in 1593 or 1594. The Induction presents us with a fragment of the rural life with which our poet must have been familiar in his native county. Wincot is a secluded hamlet near Stratford, known as Wilme-cote, where an ale-house existed known to have been frequented by Christopher Sly, and occasionally by Shakespeare, and Dr. Halliwell-Phillipps supposes the play to be represented at Clopton House (where I

reside), the only large private residence near the scene of Sly's intemperance, then inhabited by Sir George Carew, Lord Carew of Clopton and Earl of Totnes. The manners, scenes, and customs are thoroughly Italian, as well as the furniture and ornaments of houses, which could have scarcely been described from books or conversations but from personal observation on the spot. I am happy to say that George Augustus Sala, and the distinguished Shakespearean scholar "(Sam) Timmins," share my opinion that Shakespeare visited Italy.

I shall leave this subject and pass on.

In one sense, but not in a *clerical* sense, our poet was a pluralist—dramatic writer, actor, historian, poet, linguist, doctor, veterinary surgeon, and botanist: he mentions in his plays forty varieties of wild flowers and plants, all of which grow in this county of Warwick, and 130 varieties of trees, shrubs, plants, and flowers are quoted in his plays, many of which have been introduced into the gardens adjoining the Birth-place and New Place, Stratford-on-Avon. Flowers are interwoven in his plays with human life; take, for example, the words put into the mouth of Ophelia in that very sad and touching scene in "Hamlet:—"

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember.

"And there is pansies, that's for thoughts.

"There's fennel for you, and columbines.

"There's rue for you, and here's some for me; you may wear your rue with a difference.

"There's a daisy; I would give you some violets, but they withered all when my father Polonius died."

It would have been singular if Shakespeare had *not* made use of many Warwickshire provincialisms and frequently alluded to his native county and local customs in his plays. It has been claimed for our poet that in some branches of medical science he exhibited a knowledge in advance of members of that profession in those days, and he introduces the physician, surgeon, apothecary, tooth-drawer, midwife, and nurse. The only acting living doctors are Dr. Butt, physician to Henry VIII., and knighted by his Blue-beard majesty, and Dr. Caius in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," and in "Romeo and Juliet" is given a minute inventory of the apothecary's shop.

It has been said that he must have studied law, and the combination of Shylock's bond in "The Merchant of Venice," and the obtaining of Portia by three caskets may be considered the most remarkable example of his dramatic talent. The late Lord Chancellor Campbell wrote, "Antonio's bond to Shylock is prepared and talked about according to all the forms observed in an attorney's office, and the trial is conducted on the strict forms of legal proceedings." We are all acquainted with his wonderful powers of imagination in introducing the pound of flesh and jot of blood, and the judicial sentence that the bond gave no jot of blood, and Shylock, to save his life, was condemned to make over all his goods to his Christian son-in-law, Lorenzo, and submit himself to Christian

baptism. In no less than twenty-three of his plays legal phrases are frequently introduced. "As You Like It," written in 1601, is one of his most charming comedies, and there are more familiar quotations in this play than any other, except "Hamlet," "familiar in our mouths as household words." In 1885, the pretty and fascinating Mary Anderson made her *débüt* on the boards of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford in the character of "Rosalind," and admirably she acquitted herself. For the forest scene, "who killed the deer," the late Mr. Spencer Lucy shot a deer in his park at Chalecote, and presented it to the committee of the Shakespeare Memorial, and was present with the members of his family in the theatre, the deer being carried in procession on the stage, a retort courteous, after a lapse of 300 years, to the memory of one who may accidentally or otherwise have shot the ancestor of the deer so presented.

The melancholy Jaques, the witty Touchstone, the ill-favoured Audry are all popular characters, and you must be all acquainted with Jaques's soliloquy, the "Seven Ages of Man."

"Much Ado about Nothing" is another popular play, written in 1599. The present Lady Theodore Martin (then Mrs. Martin and formerly Helen Faucit), reappeared on the stage at the opening of our Memorial theatre, April 23rd, 1879 (Shakespeare's birthday), and most kindly took the part of Beatrice before a crowded and delighted audience. Lady Martin has published her ideas of some of Shakespeare's female



[From a photo by Kussell & Sons]

THE HELENA FAUCIT MEMORIAL IN THE SHAKESPEARE
 MEMORIAL BUILDINGS

Presented by Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B., December, 1900

characters impersonated by her when on the stage, but unfortunately for private circulation; but there is no breach of confidence in saying that she considers Beatrice a brilliant and charming woman. You can well understand that this character did not suffer at her hands.

I will mention one more play, "Henry VIII." The date of its first appearance is doubtful. You are all aware it is historical, and its plot commences in 1521, when the Duke of Buckingham was attainted of high treason and lost his head; the death scene is beautiful and affecting. The christening speech by Archbishop Cranmer of the Princess Elizabeth (afterwards Queen) is eloquently given, and the rise and fall of Cardinal Wolsey, who died in 1530 broken hearted, is essentially true to history. The famous soliloquy is (I fear) *not* Shakespeare's but Fletcher's, who assisted him in this play. Princess Elizabeth was christened in 1533, Cranmer died at the stake in Oxford ~~1536~~ / 1536 Henry VIII. died in his bed 1547, Queen Elizabeth died in 1603. I give you these dates to enable you to realize the space of twelve years over which this play is supposed to travel, 1521 to 1533. It is asserted that the present acting edition is a revival of the play written and acted at a much earlier date, and that it was acted before Queen Elizabeth; on the other hand, it is said that Shakespeare would not have dared to have called her to her face "an aged princess," as given in Cranmer's speech. It is certain that it was acted before James I., and the lines

“Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine,
His honour and the greatness of his name
Shall be, and make ‘new nations,’”

allude to the colonization of Virginia, the first charter of which colony was granted by James in 1606. Archbishop Cranmer's speech on the christening of Princess Elizabeth and the fall of Wolsey cannot be surpassed. The former has been termed Cranmer's prophecy :

She shall be to the happiness of England an aged princess,
Many days shall see her, and yet no day without a deed to
crown it.”

Could Cranmer have written this at the birth of our beloved Queen Victoria, it would indeed have been a *true* prophecy. Shakespeare was born thirty-one years after the christening of Queen Elizabeth. There is one remarkable prophecy put into the mouth of Puck in “*Midsummer Night's Dream* : “I'll put a girdle round the earth in forty minutes.”

As a matter of fact, there are now 152,000 miles of submarine cables at a cost of £40,000,000 ; and in July of this year the Prince of Wales telegraphed his congratulations to India and our colonies and received their replies in the course of a few minutes.

The ablest commentator of Shakespeare's characters should be a good actor, and in this age the finger unmistakably points to Henry Irving, who has largely assisted to resuscitate the stage, and done honour to Shakespeare's memory by impersonating, in a masterly manner, many of his most prominent characters. In



From a photo by Russell & Co. Ltd.

THE DRINKING FOUNTAIN IN ROTHER MARKET

Presented by Mr. G. W. Childs, of Philadelphia, United States, in the Jubilee Year
of Queen Victoria, 1877

Opened by Sir Henry Irving

1887 Mr. Irving visited Stratford, when he inaugurated the opening of Mr. Child's American drinking fountain, and was elected unanimously a life trustee of Shakespeare's birthplace, in the room of Dr. Ingleby, then deceased, our popular Lord Lieutenant being the chairman and president.

Names of Trustees for life :

The Lord Lieutenant (Lord Leigh).

The High Steward (Sir Arthur Hodgson).

Ernest Edward Baker, Esq., F.S.A.

Revd. Canon Evans.

Edgar Flower, Esq.

Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower, F.S.A.

Frederick Haines, Esq., F.S.A.

Sir Henry Irving.

Sir Theodore Martin, K.C.B., K.C.V.O.

Samuel Timmins, Esq., F.S.A.

It is said you cannot have too much of a good thing, but there is a medium in all things, and I shall withdraw from Shakespeare's plays and allude very briefly to my local knowledge.

In 1847 a successful movement was started for the purchase of the house in Henley Street, wide-world known as Shakespeare's birthplace, bought in 1552 for £40 by Shakespeare's father. Public meetings were held and subscriptions set on foot. Lords and Commons came well to the front (Lord Leigh gave £50, Earl of Warwick £50, and the late Prince Albert £250), a committee was formed in Stratford, the late

Dr. Halliwell-Phillipps subscribed liberally, as well as the members of the Archæological Society of England, and many others. The birthplace had been occupied for some years by an enterprising butcher, who improved his trade by inviting his customers to enter with the enticing signboard, "The Immortal Shakespeare was born in this house. Cart and horse to let out cheap." These signboards are now exhibited inside the birthplace, but the "cart and horse to let out cheap" has disappeared. The celebrated American showman, the late Mr. Barnum, visited Stratford in 1846 with a keen eye to business, saw his opportunity, and offered the owner £2,700, which was accepted. The owner, Mr. Court, had bought the house in 1806 from the heirs of Thomas Hart (through the poet's sister Joan), descended in direct line from the poet's daughter, Susannah Hart.

Fortunately for the English nation, and Stratford in particular, the deed of purchase was not signed by Barnum. The British public, roused to action, subscribed the requisite amount, and saved this country from indelible disgrace.

On September 16th, 1847, it was sold at the auction mart in London by Mr. Edmund Robins, brother of the celebrated George Robins, then deceased, who knocked it down for £3,000, amidst loud and prolonged cheers, to the members of the Stratford and London joint committee, and the property is now vested in the names of the mayor and corporation upon trust, with other *ex officio* members, and ten life trustees.

Stratford has of late years become a literary Mecca where pilgrims from America, India, Australia, and all parts of the world come to do homage at the poet's shrine. The various nationalities numbered last year thirty-eight, amongst them 4,450 from America, 140 from Australia, 34 from New Zealand, etc. In 1852 there were 2,300 visitors ; last year, up to the end of our financial year, March 31st, 1894, there were 18,000, up to present date in this year close upon 21,000 visitors have entered. There was last year a falling off caused by the Chicago Exhibition and financial crisis in America. The trust deed, to which I have alluded, was drawn very tight. For instance, a balance of nearly £3,000 had accumulated and it could not be invested, but remained on deposit at low rate of interest in one of the local banks ; to obviate this difficulty a Bill was passed through Parliament in 1892 (unopposed), thanks to the kind and gratuitous exertions of Sir Theodore Martin, the Hon. Chandos Leigh, and Mr. Haynes, enabling the trustees to invest accumulated funds for the benefit of the trust, and as I have previously told you, Anne Hathaway's cottage and furniture were purchased for £3,500 (a large sum), but the trustees were credibly informed that Chicago had made a larger bid, and they would have been justly blamed had they allowed this historic cottage to have been sold to our American cousins.

The house where our great poet died no longer exists. It was razed to the ground together with the

"Mulberry Tree" by the ruthless Gastrell in 1759. For this act he had to escape from Stratford to save his own life. Shakespeare spent many years of his life off and on in this house: his son-in-law, Dr. Hall, died in it, and in 1643 Shakespeare's daughter Susannah entertained Queen Henrietta Maria.

In the museum attached to the birthplace is a gold signet ring known as Shakespeare's, with the initials W.S., dug up by a labourer seventy years ago in the churchyard. I heard an American remark that it was the property of William Stubbs!! There are forty portraits, busts, and engravings of Shakespeare in birthplace and museum (a large and very valuable collection). Our late custodian, Miss Chat-taway, who enjoys a pension of £50 per annum from the trustees, placing her hand upon the bust was pleased to say "plenty of room here for the mighty brain." The Ely Palace portrait is considered to be the best, presented by the late Mr. Henry Graves. There is also the "Chandos" portrait—the original is in the National Portrait Gallery. It was bought in 1710 for forty guineas by Mrs. Barry, a celebrated actress, at the sale of the effects of that great actor Thomas Betterton, and passed afterwards into the possession of the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos. The late Dr. Ingleby, for many years one of the trustees, and a Shakespearean scholar, who died in December, 1886, proposed in 1883 to disinter Shakespeare's remains with the avowed intention of examining the skull and comparing it with the numerous

and conflicting portraits, and he might have had his way, but the mayor, Alderman Colbourne, and corporation, who are the lay rectors and proprietors of the chancel of the parish church, very properly declined to countenance such a gross act of desecration and vandalism. Nor did they forget the lines inscribed on his tomb :

“Good friend, for Jesus’ sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here,
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.”

Requiescat in pace. You may have heard of the death mask of Shakespeare, now at Darmstadt, the property of Dr. Becker, which came into his possession in 1861, on the death of his brother, who purchased it in 1843 at Mayence, when the collection of Count Kesselstadt, late canon of Cologne Cathedral, and a great antiquarian, was sold at auction. Dr. Becker brought the mask to England, and Professor Richard Owen satisfied himself that it was taken from Shakespeare’s face after death, and that it was the origin of the bust in the chancel of Stratford church. On back of the mask is the inscription A.D. 1616, made with a blunt stick when the plaster was soft. The mask has a very strong likeness to Shakespeare’s bust in the chancel. Chantry called the bust a genuine portrait, taken by Gerard Johnson, a Dutch sculptor, who, by a singular coincidence, made the bust of Lord Bacon at Verulam St. Alban’s, and

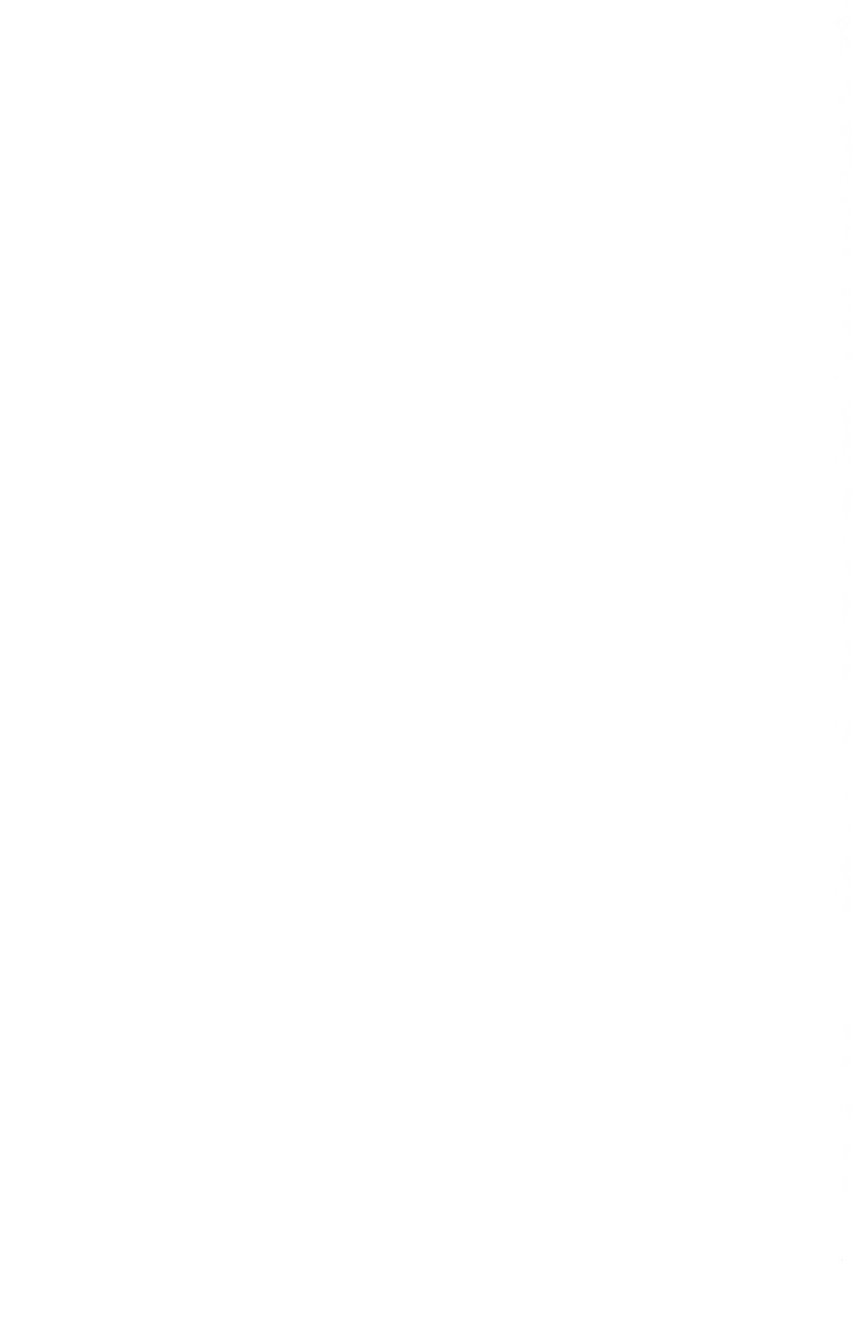
many other busts of that date, and believed by many (and I share in the belief) to be nothing less than the mask of the face and features of the poet taken after death. My friend, Lord Ronald Gower (who spent nine years in modelling in a studio in Paris the exquisite group of Shakesperian statuary which he presented to Stratford in October, 1888, towards the close of my mayoralty) has no doubt whatever that the bust was practically modelled from the mask, the only difference being the length of the nose, and with this exception, the tip of the nose seems to have been broken off and repaired in shortening it. The measurements taken by Lord Ronald were exactly the same ; he did not, therefore, hesitate to select the bust and the mask for his statue of Shakespeare on the top of the Ronald Gower monument, which is the finest stature of our poet in the world, not excepting the one in the Central Park, New York, which I saw in 1889. Lord Ronald was anxious to present the Darmstadt mask to Stratford, but his anxiety was brought to a standstill by the owner demanding £10,000. An American millionaire may carry it off some day as a trophy to the new world, or render himself *immortal* by presenting it to their Mecca of Stratford-on-Avon. The mask was originally purchased by a German nobleman attached to the embassy to the court of our James I., and in this way found its way into Germany.

Lord Ronald's group consists of four of Shakespeare's characters cast in bronze of heroic size,



LORD RONALD SUTHERLAND GOWER'S COLOSSAL
STATUE OF SHAKESPEARE

Presented by him in October, 1808



Hamlet, Lady Macbeth, Prince Hal, and Falstaff, representing philosophy, tragedy, history, and comedy, surmounted by a statue of Shakespeare in a sitting posture.

I am much interested in *this* mask, and in the visit of Shakespeare to Italy. I *was* interested in the absurd attempt to dethrone Shakespeare, but this ended, as I expected, in a fiasco, largely owing to the clever pamphlet of the Rev. Dr. Nicholson, of Leamington, who pulverized Donnelly's cryptogram into powder, and satisfactorily proved that "there is no cipher in Shakespeare." The Speaker of the House of Commons at a recent public meeting held in the Leamington Town Hall quoted from my speech about six years ago, that "the idea of Bacon having written Shakespeare's plays was all gammon."

There is a tradition which is generally believed, that our poet paid a visit to Bidford, seven miles from Stratford, with a party of his townsmen, that they imbibed too much beer, lost the power of their legs, or we would say, took more than was conducive to pedestrian accuracy, and found shelter on their return home under the wide-spreading boughs of a venerable crab tree, where they camped for the night. This crab tree was cut down by its owner seventy years ago; it was being gradually destroyed by visitors anxious to obtain a relic; its decayed trunk and roots were carefully removed to Bidford Grange in 1825. Our poet caught cold, it brought on a fever, from the effects of which he died on the

anniversary of his fifty-third birthday. The vicar of Stratford-on-Avon has emigrated to America in search of the tombstone of one of Shakespeare's pall-bearers—some will tell you in search of American dollars. It is true that one Edward Helder, of Bidford, died in 1618 near Baltimore, and that his gravestone was discovered in 1860. It is the earliest English epitaph in America: "Here lies the body of Edward Helda, Physician and Surgeon, born in Bidford, England, in 1542, was one of the pall-bearers to the body of William Shakespeare; after a brief illness, his spirit ascended in the year of our Lord 1618, aged 76 years" ("Canadian Free Press"). I hope the vicar will get a good photograph of it and bring it back with him. On the occasion of this ill-fated visit he is credited with the following epigram:

"Piping Pebworth, dancing Marston,
Haunted Hillborough, hungry Grafton,
Dodging Exhall, Papist Wexford,
Beggary Broom and drunken Bidford."

These villages still retain their names, and the site of the crab tree is shown upon the ordnance survey of the map of the county. Marston is celebrated for its Morris dancers, piping Pebworth for its music, Broom is beggarly from the poverty of its soil, Papist Wexford from the ancient Roman Catholic family of Throckmorton, haunted Hillborough is now a farmhouse, solitary and with the credit of being haunted, dodging Exhall, so called from the difficulty of finding it among so many winding roads; and hungry

Grafton from its soil, which is very poor. David Garrick, who visited Stratford in 1769, described it as the most dirty, unseemly, ill-paved, wretched-looking town in all England. "A change has come o'er the spirit of our dream." David Garrick, on the occasion of this visit, presented to the Corporation a full-length portrait of himself by Gainsborough, upon which is represented a bust of Shakespeare. This valuable picture, valued at £5,000, hangs in the town hall. In 1768 David Garrick was unanimously elected an honorary burgess of the borough.

I shall conclude this lecture, already I fear too long, with a very short allusion to the Ignatius Donnelly controversy, which has now died out, but which, thanks to the pages of the "Daily Telegraph," stirred up six years ago a strong anti-Shakespearean feeling in this country and elsewhere. Bacon was born in London in 1561, three years before Shakespeare, and the belief is that he *never* visited Warwickshire. Bacon was a philosopher, Shakespeare a poet and dramatist. Shakespeare was never found guilty of corruption, never made an enemy, never betrayed or deserted a friend, invariably led an honest life, and was never insolvent ; he left behind him an earthly inheritance, and an unspotted and imperishable name. Sir Theodore Martin comes to the rescue and quotes Bacon's will, in which he requests his executors to have all his writings bound and placed in certain libraries which he mentions. Bacon died in 1626 all Shakespeare's plays were published three

years previously, and a man of such consummate vanity as Bacon would never have permitted this if he had written any of the plays. No writer more highly appreciated the many virtues and excellent qualities of woman, which in his numerous female characters he has delineated to the life and the letter. It is marvellous how he painted so many portraits of womanly excellence and refinement in an age when even the court was coarse in speech and manner, in such characters as Portia, Miranda, Desdemona, Juliet, Rosalind, Beatrice, Cordelia, etc. These are bright examples of what is noblest and most lovable. Where did he get this high estimate of female character? It must have been from his mother, a lady of gentle birth; the seeds were sown in his infancy and matured in his childhood. Is there, I would ask, the faintest indication that in any of Bacon's writings *his* mind had dwelt upon what is best and purest in womanhood, and that he could have described those qualities which constitute the highest charm? Is there anything to show that he could have drawn her in her weakness, her waywardness, her caprice, her strength, her self-sacrifice, her constancy?

In the absence of any evidence that Bacon had the genius to divine the possibilities of womanly worth, how idle it is to seek to wean our devotion and gratitude from him whose name for three centuries has been identified with such matchless conceptions?

Ben Jonson writes, "He was not for an age, but

for all time." Milton writes, "What needs my Shakespeare for his honor'd bones the labour of an age in piled stones? Thou in our wonder and astonishment hast built thyself a live-long monument."

When this controversy was raging, there was a fancy dress ball at the Mansion House, and the most attractive figure was Master Shakespeare with a flitch of bacon under his arm, and on Valentine's day, same year, some kind anonymous friend sent me a flitch of bacon. I am satisfied that this large and intelligent audience have no faith in Mr. Donnelly's wild and fanciful cryptogram, no sympathy with the Baconian theory, but they believe that the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written by him, and to attempt to mix up his immortal name with Bacon is all gammon. It was a pity for Lord Bacon's posthumous fame that this controversy arose. There was no occasion to dig him up, expose his many faults, be reminded that he was the wisest, brightest, but meanest of mankind, and prove that he was deficient in those moral qualities which we universally recognize in Shakespeare's plays. We can turn in Stratford with gratitude to the spot where our poet first saw the light, and where in the mellow and modest evenings of his days he passed a peaceful retirement.

We will not be guilty of robbing him of *his* imperishable fame, or deprive ourselves of the priceless gift he handed down to us as our inheritance. Wherever the English tongue is spoken, the poems and plays of the world's master poet will stand out in

bold relief as a monument of his immortal genius, and so long as children put forth the tender leaves of innocence and hope, so long as woman creates a paradise on earth by her love and devotion, so long as our brave soldiers and sailors achieve honour and renown in battle fields and on board battle ships, so long as nature continues to throw her mantle of beauty over the earth "until the great globe itself and all that it inherits shall dissolve," so long shall the writings of William Shakespeare continue for all time to be the greatest treasure as they are the chiefest glory of our noble English literature, or to adopt his own words,

"Wherever the bright sun of heaven shall shine,
His honour and the greatness of his name
Shall be.



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